

Plan for Civilizing the  
North American Indian

by

JOHN DANIEL HAMMERER

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An Account of a Plan for  
Civilizing the North Amer-  
ican Indians, proposed in  
the Eighteenth Century.

BY

JOHN DANIEL HAMMERER.

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EDITED BY

PAUL LEICESTER FORD.

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## NOTE.

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THE following tract, printed probably between 1730 and 1740, contains, so far as I have been able to ascertain, the first proposition looking to a civilization of the Indians, except such as would come with that evangelization, to which all the energies of the missionary attempts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were directed. Of the author of the proposals, John Daniel Hammerer, I can learn nothing, and presume that he never even attempted to carry out his scheme, as here outlined. What is to-day but partly adopted, was, when he wrote, premature, and of necessity unappreciated. It is always easier to destroy than to make over, and the early colo-

nists were too busy with their own struggle for existence to pay heed to the welfare of those whom they regarded as foes; while public opinion in England was fairly voiced by Attorney-General Seymour, when, in reply to an appeal for funds to help educate young men to be ministers for saving the souls of the colonists, he said, "Souls! Damn your souls! Make tobacco."

The original tract, which is a folio of three leaves, is not mentioned by Sabin, Rich, Field, Lowndes, or any other bibliographer, so far as I can find, nor is it noticed in any contemporary periodical of that time among its reviews. In Joseph Smith's *Catalogue of Friends' Books* (I, 496) I find the following title: "Account of a Plan for Civilizing the North American Indians. The 2nd impression, with a Postscript, by T[homas] C[rowley],

Large folio, *No printer's name or place* [about 1766]," which is presumably the same work; but as I have been unable to trace the whereabouts of a single copy, I have not been able to compare it with the original edition. This reprint is made from the copy of the first issue formerly in the possession of Peter Collinson, of London, which is the only one the editor has been able to learn of.

PAUL LEICESTER FORD.

97 Clark St., Brooklyn, N. Y.



ACCOUNT OF A PLAN  
FOR  
Civilizing the North American Indians.

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A CIVILIZATION of those *Indian* Nations that live within the *British* Dominions in *North America*, by which they might be made acquainted with, and enabled to obtain and enjoy, the Conveniences and Benefits of a social Life, taught Agriculture, and some of the most useful Arts, and instructed in the Principles of sound Knowledge; by which their Manners might be humanized, a rational Submission to wholesome Laws and Regulations introduced, and their Minds prepared for

the Reception of moral Virtues and Christian Doctrine; by which, in fine, they might be fitted to intermarry with our Planters, and become profitable Members of the *British* Commonwealth, and faithful Subjects to his Majesty and the Laws of these Realms. Such a Civilization, no doubt, will appear to be a desirable Object to every humane and virtuous Mind, and a Concern of national Importance to every sincere Lover of his Country.

For as, on the one hand, a System, calculated to obtain these valuable Ends, might afford Means to introduce among numerous Nations, living as yet in Ignorance and Unconcern, the Knowledge of the true God and His holy Worship, open a Door for a freer Propagation of the Gospel among

them, preserve them in that Innocence they have yet remaining, or confirm them against that Corruption which a Communication with bad Men and an introduction of *European* Vices must necessarily produce, and otherwise to promote their spiritual as well as temporal Welfare, as far as it seems in the Power of Men, and therefore might be concluded to be Part of their Duty to do it; so, on the other hand, a gradual Stop would thereby be put to those bloody Wars, cruel Inroads, and horrid Barbarities, with which those Countries are every now-and-then infested, and a great Expence of Men and Money saved to this Nation; Trade would flourish and increase, the Growth and Prosperity of the Colonies would be secured against frequent In-

terruptions from that Quarter, and the *British* Dominions would receive an Accession of Strength and Numbers.

It may therefore reasonably be expected, that not only every Hint and Proposal, any-ways conducive to this salutary End, will be received favourably and examined with Candor, but also, that if any consistent and practicable Method, which may have a probable Tendency to the Promotion of it, could be discovered, it would meet with due Encouragement from all who have the Good of Mankind, the Growth of Religion, and the Prosperity of their Country at Heart.

A comprehensive System, which should take in all those *Indian* Nations who live within the Confines of the *British* Empire in *America*, which



should be supported and encouraged by a national Provision, countenanced and protected by the governing Powers, patronized and promoted by the united Efforts of the truly Benevolent and Public-spirited in the Nation; in which every one should act that Part which by his Station in Life and the Relation he stands in he is empowered to perform, contribute that Share which by his Abilities, Wisdom, and Knowledge he is enabled to do, and fulfill those Obligations which a Sense of Duty, duly attended to and applied to the case of the *Indians*, may seem to require of him in just Proportion to discharge, would without Controversy be the most adequate, the most desirable, and most profiting Scheme of Civilization; which would

soon clear the Way of every Obstacle that might obstruct the Work, quickly communicate the Benefit thereof, and render it very extensive, facilitate every Measure for introducing its Beginnings, and promoting its Progress, and afford a well-grounded Assurance that it would please an All-gracious God to bless such upright Endeavours, and complete the Whole, to the Comfort and Happiness of His rational Creatures, and the Manifestation of His own Power, Wisdom, and Glory.

But as such a System may seem to many a Work of too great Extent to be easily put into Practice; as even such as are persuaded of the beneficial Tendency of such a Scheme may apprehend it liable to many Difficulties, and look upon it as at a Distance; as

every Design of this Nature, when made an Object of public Attention, is certainly subject to Delays, and will require Time to bring it to Maturity; a more contracted Plan should seem better adapted to make a Beginning in this salutary Work, and establish its Practicability.

Of such a Method I propose to give some Account, after I shall have premised a few general Principles, upon which I apprehend every such Plan, whether comprehensive or contracted, should proceed. The First of these Principles I conceive to be,

I. That the Work of Civilization ought to be carried on among the *Indians* themselves.

As the Subject of this Proposition is too extensive to be fully explained

within a small Compass, I shall only observe, that the Fondness the *Indians* have for their Children will always prevent them from sending any competent Number of them at least, into the Colonies to have them educated; and that, besides, the Objects of Civilization are such as can only be obtained and duly performed among those people by zealous intelligent Men, who can avail themselves of the Means they possess, of the Dispositions of the *Indians*, and of other favourable Circumstances, to convey instruction by, and promote the Work effectually. The Second Principle may be,

II. That those who undertake or are sent upon this Service should be Men of irreproachable Lives and Manners,

duly qualified for the Business, and sincerely concerned for its Success.

This Proposition may be thought superfluous, as it carries its own Evidence with it: For surely those who are not qualified for an Undertaking can be of no Service in it. However, it may serve for a Direction in the forming of Plans (as none can be expected to have any Success in which this material Requisite may become liable to be overlooked) and also for a Caution to those who may be willing to undertake the Office; as such as should embark in it upon selfish Views, or be deficient in the Qualifications necessary for such a Task, would hardly find their Expectations answered, would have but little Ease and Comfort, or even Security for

their Lives, in the Midst of Nations unchecked by either Laws or Subordination, whom they can only expect to attach to themselves by the Ties of Love, Confidence, and Gratitude, which cannot be formed but by Kindness, Hospitality, an unblameable Life and Conduct, real Services, and convincing the *Indians* that they have a greater Interest in the Preservation of their Teachers than in their Destruction. The Third Principle is conceived to be,

III. That the Scheme itself should be rendered progressive; setting out from plain and easy Beginnings, and proceeding, as these seem to answer or promise Success, to greater Objects.

It should begin with single Men, qualified as before-mentioned; but

after these have laid the Ground-work, studied the Language, Notions, and Genius of the *Indians*, gained their Love and Confidence, convinced them of *their* earnest Desire to promote their Good, acquired some Influence over them, brought them to submit to some Laws and Regulations, and thereby prepared them for the Reception of the intended Benefit, then something more ought to be done to forward the Work.

These Men might be provided with an Assistant each, young Men, willing and capable of entering into the Spirit of the Plan and promoting it; with a competent number of Persons skilled in such Trades as are requisite to procure the Necessaries and some of the Conveniences of civil Life, and cap-

able of teaching the same, such as a Smith, a Carpenter, a Mason, a Husbandman; as also some Women capable of teaching Needle-work, how to manage a Family, and other Employments fit for Women and Girls; among whose Qualifications, a good Character for Honesty and Sobriety ought to be considered: And lastly, with some Lads and Girls, by way of Apprentices to the Institution, who might serve to supply Deficiencies, and to lead on and tame the rude and undisciplined Minds of the *Indian* Youths.

What other Measures might afterwards become expedient to pursue, either for teaching the *Indians* how to raise valuable Commodities, that they might have Returns to make for such further Necessaries as they may stand



in Need of; to regulate the Trade with them; or to answer those other valuable Purposes of which Mention has been made at the Beginning; Time would shew, and Circumstances point out, when once a good Foundation is laid.

I come now to the Plan hinted at above; which consists in trying an Experiment, in a single Instance, and with a particular Nation, whose Manners are less savage and barbarous than those of some others, and therefore a more hopeful Object for Civilization, to see how far a Method, grounded upon the Principles laid down in the Premises, is practicable, what Success it may meet with, and what Good such an Attempt may produce. And as, from a sincere Desire

of being employed in promoting the Welfare of my Fellow-Creatures according to the small Measure of my Abilities, and a strong Persuasion of the beneficial Tendency of such an Undertaking, in which I thought I might be useful, I am come to a Resolution to devote my best Endeavours to the Service of this Pursuit, as far as I can conceive it consistent with my other Duties to GOD and Men: I humbly presume that I cannot do better than to lay before such Gentlemen as, from Motives of Humanity, Benevolence, or Patriotism, may approve of the Scope of such an Undertaking, the particular Manner in which I propose to proceed; that they might be enabled to judge how far the Intention of the Scheme may be answered there-

by, and how far it may deserve their Patronage and Encouragement.

I have made Choice of the *Creek* Nation to try the Experiment with; which Choice is consistent with the proposed Plan, because, on Account of the good Character for their native good Sense and friendly Disposition they have obtained in the Province, on Account of the favourable Testimony General *Oglethorpe* bears to their moral Conduct and Readiness in listening to Reason, and on Account of their Desires, repeatedly expressed, of being instructed in the Knowledge and useful Arts of the *English*, they afford rational Hopes that Civilization may be carried on among them with Success.

To prepare myself the better for

this Service, I propose, if it please DIVINE PROVIDENCE, to take my passage for the *Savannah* in *Georgia*, in the first Vessel which shall sail for that Place; and being arrived there, to go and live, for about Six or Eight Months, among the *Tamacraw Indians*, a Tribe of the *Creek* Nation, settled within Three or Four Miles of the *Savannah*, or, in case of their Removal, among such of them as live within or nearest to the Settlements, in order to learn the *Creek* Language, accustom myself to the People and their Ways, study their Genius, Manners, Notions, and Dispositions, contract a Friendship with some of them, and, if Occasion should offer, with some of the chief Men of the *Corvetas*, the principal Tribe among the *Creeks*.

Having by this Means obtained some Knowledge of their Language, and what else I proposed to be informed of, I then intend to take the first Opportunity to go to *Coweta*, the chief Town of the *Creek* Nations, there to carry on the Work to which my Endeavours are devoted.

Now if this my Attempt should be so far approved by the Well-wishers to Civilization as to obtain their Support and Assistance, I propose, according as I shall be enabled thereby, to engage some Handicraftsmen or other, such as a Smith, a Carpenter, a Husbandman, of honest Principles and sober Deportment, to accompany and assist me in the Work, which my Six or Eight Months Stay in the Province might afford me an Opportunity of doing upon easy Terms.

As I may be farther enabled, I shall provide myself with some Books, Paper, and other Things, for conveying the Beginnings of Learning, and for other Ends of Instruction; with some Tools and Instruments, for the Purpose of Building and Agriculture; with some Articles for necessary Cloathing and Furniture; perhaps also with some Seeds and Medicines.

And as the making of Presents is customary with the *Indians*, and of great Efficacy to gain their Good-will and Affection (perhaps because they look upon them as Tokens of the like Dispositions in the Giver), as far as these Ends may be obtained, I propose to comply with this Custom, and indulge their Inclination, as I may be enabled. But then such Presents

ought not to consist in Articles which only please their Fancies for a while, or, what is worse, tend to corrupt their Manners; but this Opportunity ought to be taken to introduce among them such as may be useful and of lasting Service to them. And as it will be the Business of a Teacher to instruct the *Indians* in the Use of such Articles, explain to them and make them sensible of their real Usefulness, and inform them of their just Value; so an Acquaintance with them, and a Desire of obtaining more of them, may afford Motives to induce those People to Industry, to a rational employing of their Time and Faculties, and for various other good Purposes.

I should think myself obliged and make it my Study to give a regular

Account of the Progress of the Work, and of my Proceedings therein, to the benevolent Encouragers of the Undertaking, as often as they shall require, or there is any material Occasion for it; as also to pay due Regard to the Instructions and Resolutions with which they should be pleased to favour me, and to endeavour, to the best of my Power, to discharge with Honesty, Faithfulness, and steady Application, the Trust that may be reposed in me.

JOHN DANIEL HAMMERER.











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